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WASHINGTON - A bipartisan group of Illinois' congressional delegation warned BP Amoco officials Tuesday not to proceed with an Indiana oil refinery expansion that would increase pollution in Lake Michigan.

Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Ill., said after a meeting with officials that included Robert Malone, BP America's president and chairman, that the company needs to offer up a plan that results in "no new, net pollution" in the lake.

"If not, I think, and our voice was very clear ... a set of rapidly escalating costs by the Congress will be put on BP until they agree with us to protect Lake Michigan," Kirk said. He did not elaborate.

The company agreed to report back to lawmakers in early September about its review of water treatment options that might address pollution concerns, BP spokesman Ronnie Chappell said.

"We have heard them loud and clear," he said. "It was a productive session, from that standpoint."

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management approved BP's request last month to release into Lake Michigan more ammonia and silt from its refinery in Whiting, Indiana. The amount still is within federal guidelines.

Rep. Rahm Emanuel, a Chicagoan who chairs the House Democratic Conference, underscored the importance of the Great Lakes as a major source of drinking water in the United States.

"We were clear that, when it comes to Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes, this is our

Yellowstone Park and this is our Grand Canyon," Emanuel said. "We have spent too much time and resources improving on Lake Michigan's environmental standard and quality to see, for the first time, new dumping in this lake."

Under the Indiana wastewater discharge permit, which took effect Monday, BP could expand its Whiting plant's capacity by 15 percent and dump more ammonia and silt into the lake. The expansion is expected to be completed in four years.

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich said Tuesday that state officials would consider legal action if Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels doesn't rescind the permit.

But Tom Easterly, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management commissioner, countered that BP's wastewater permit imposes even tougher requirements than federal law because Indiana has designated the lake an outstanding state resource deserving special protection.

"The permitted levels will not affect drinking water, recreation or aquatic life," Easterly said.

A Daniels spokesman said the governor would stand by Easterly's statement.

Indiana state Rep. Scott Pelath said a government oversight panel he chairs will hold an Aug. 22 public hearing on the permit approval, which he said has upset northwestern Indiana residents.

"If anyone in our country is not hurting for resources, it's the oil companies," the Michigan City Democrat said. "Many do not understand why BP Amoco needs breaks on environmental compliance. Quite frankly, neither do I."

Congressional lawmakers also want the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to clarify its role in approving the permit. They have said they are awaiting a response from the agency.

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., said Tuesday that without a new wastewater plan from BP, lawmakers could target its application for an air pollution permit still pending before Indiana state officials.

BP spokesman Chappell said the expansion project would require boosting the refinery's heating capacity, which would produce a "significant" increase in greenhouse gases.

But he said BP possibly could offset increased air pollution in the Lake Michigan area by reducing emissions at other facilities or participating in other air pollution regulating programs.